



## NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor, Waterbury, CT 06702 • 203-757-0535 • 203-735-8688 • [nvcogct.gov](http://nvcogct.gov)

February 24, 2023

Senator Lopes, Representative Gresko, and members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for accepting my written statement into the record regarding House Bill 6664, An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority, as drafted.

I am mayor of the City Waterbury and Chairman of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. I and other Chief Elected Officials in the Naugatuck Valley Region acknowledge the severity of the waste capacity crisis that the state is facing and very concerned that waste tipping fees are projected to skyrocket as haulers transport increasing amounts of waste farther and farther away to out of state facilities. This escalating cost of solid waste disposal will significantly impact local taxpayers. Recycling fees are unpredictable. We appreciate the multi-faceted approach that HB 6664 takes in approaching the issue, understanding that there is no one solution that will solve the problem. There are, however, real questions about the impact that portions of the bill would have on municipalities and their residents. For this reason, we are opposed to the proposed bill as currently written. Our concerns include the following:

Section 8 would drastically increase the fee levied on municipal solid waste from \$1.50 per ton to \$3 or \$5 per ton depending on the destination of the material, with a substantial amount of the proceeds going to the general fund. In Waterbury, based on recent MSW tonnage, this could amount to an increase of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in tipping fees at a time when the city is already struggling with rising waste disposal costs.

Section 5 would mandate universal access to source separated food waste collection. While this could help to reduce MSW tonnage, it is unclear what the impacts to residents and municipalities would be. Ongoing waste reduction pilots sponsored by DEEP that will begin to evaluate efficacy and impacts are only in their infancy. The state should delay mandating the separation of food scraps until these pilot programs have been completed and we understand their expected effectiveness.

There is also likely to be a substantial impact to municipalities resulting from the required separation of organics at educational facilities outlined in section 7.

This is an extremely complex issue and no solution to the waste problem will prove effective without robust engagement at the state, regional and local government level, and with the involvement of private sector partners. We feel that we need more time and discussion on how best to address the disposal of municipal solid waste and determine with much more certainty what the benefits and impacts to our communities and residents will be. We would welcome the opportunity to work with legislators, the Governor and DEEP to ensure that the most effective solutions are implemented and

changes to our waste management system do not unduly impact municipalities or taxpayers.

On behalf of the mayors and first selectmen of the Naugatuck Valley region, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil M. O'Leary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" and last name "O'Leary" clearly distinguishable.

Neil M. O'Leary

Mayor, City of Waterbury  
Chairman, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments